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Correspondence.

AUTOGRAPHIC ETCHING.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: I send you by this mail four prints of etchings from nature, on the Marmaton River. I know that etching on photo plates is no new thing, although I have never seen any pictures made by the process. I have been conscious for the last twenty-five years, while teaching art, of the lack of some simple and cheap method by which amateurs might duplicate their sketches for the benefit of their friends, and think the etching of which I send you specimens is the thing needed. To etch on copper requires considerable outlay for plates, press, etc. To make pen drawings and have them photo-engraved or lithographed is also expensive and cannot be done at home; while copying-pads are useless. These various things I tried while in the East. Since coming West, some eighteen months ago, I have had no time until the present to do anything about art, except to read your valuable periodical. Please inform me if you know of any treatise on this style of etching already published. If nothing has appeared, I desire, to write one, giving a detailed account of all materials and expenses connected with the process, as well as the method of producing the pictures—an illustrated hand-book. Very truly yours,

(Rev.) BENJ. HARTLEY, Fort Scott, Kas.

ANSWER.—The prints have been received. They are delightful bits of landscape, and charmingly executed. The process by which they are reproduced, however, is not new. If we are not mistaken, they are solar prints taken from a photographer's ordinary dry collodion plate, rendered opaque by nitrate of silver, upon which the drawings have been etched with a needle. We have before us a volume of such etchings published in 1859, by W. A. Townsend & Co., New York, and entitled "Auto-graph Etchings by American Artists," produced by a new application of photographic art, under the supervision of John W. Ehninger. The contributors include Durand, Kensett, Darley, Casilear, Eastman Johnson, Geo. Boughton, and S. R. Gifford.

A "UNIQUE" PIECE OF DRESDEN.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: We have in our family a very curious cup and saucer of real old Dresden. It is pale-green in color and is decorated with three landscapes beautifully painted. It is marked with the blue crossed swords, with a star between the handles. Unfortunately, it is badly cracked, otherwise, I am told it would be quite unique. What is its value? I know that it has been in the family more than a hundred years. S. J. M., Selma, Ala.

ANSWER.—Your cup and saucer, we can assure you, is quite unique, notwithstanding that it is "badly cracked." There is no other piece of Dresden a hundred years old in existence, with the mark you describe, the mark being that of the Marcolini period, which only dates from 1796. To determine its value, you see, is therefore impossible.

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY BUILDING.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Daily passing the building of the National Academy of Design in Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street, I have tried to make myself believe that this structure, which I am told is a miniature model of the famous Doge's Palace in Venice, is really beautiful. I must tell you frankly that I know nothing about the technical principles of architecture; but it does seem to me as, say, an intelligent layman, that the building is anything but symmetrical. Tell me, Mr. Editor, am I wrong in my impression that it is badly balanced, the upper part much too heavy for the lower part? S. H. L., Madison Avenue, New York.

ANSWER.—You are not far wrong. The Doge's Palace, after which the building is modelled, beautiful though it be in some respects, especially in the graceful gothic arch-work of the two lower stories—is doubtless faulty in the disproportionate massiveness of the upper part. You are by no means the first person who has noticed this. It is a well-founded belief among the Venetians that the huge upper story of the Doge's Palace was added by another architect than the one who designed the building, the Council Chamber having been found to be too small, and larger rooms being required.

TO MAKE SCARLET PERMANENT.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Please inform me how to prevent pure scarlet in water-colors from fading. SUBSCRIBER, Rochester, N. Y.

ANSWER.—Keep the cake carefully wrapped in paper to prevent exposure to the air or contact with metal. Never mix it with a metallic color, and, after using it, glaze it thickly with gum arabic. Some artists use crimson lake, and, when it is dry, give it a coat of gamboge, which will turn it scarlet and make it permanent.

A SUGGESTION AS TO COLOR.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: My dining-room has been papered with a "tapestry" paper which looked quite light in the piece, but now it is on the walls, it appears too dark for the wood-work, which is a sort of light-drab neutral tint. The prevailing color of the paper is citrine. What can I do to harmonize it with the wood-work? The furniture of the room, I may add, is mostly ebonized.

M. R. F., Newburyport, Mass.

ANSWER.—The wood-work should always be darker than the

walls. Yours might be painted dark bronze green, relieved by occasional lines of red where the mouldings occur. Dark low toned Antwerp blue would also harmonize with citrine walls.

SUPPLEMENT AND FIRST-PAGE DESIGNS.

PLATE LXV. is a design for a small dessert plate, being the first of a second series of six, drawn for *THE ART AMATEUR* by Professor Camille Piton. The flowers represented are "White Jasmine, Mignonette, Blue-bottle, and Magnolia." The general effect of this decoration is a little slender, the plants being thin by themselves, and the pupil is expected to introduce some grasses in the background, following the general form of the subject. These grasses should be blue-green, the farthest being the more blue, and they should be done at the first with the ground, before the tracing of the drawing with carmine so they will be crossed by all the stems. Then the pupil will paint the flowers. White Jasmine—The white will be the white of the china; for the first painting use light sky-blue, yellow for mixing, and retouch with gray No. 2, and brown No. 3, in the centre. Blue-bottles—Light-blue shaded with ultramarine. Magnolia—First painting, yellow for mixing, very light, retouched with gray No. 2. Mignonette—Apple-green, yellow for mixing, and pearl-gray and a little bit of lake red. Foliage—Deep chrome-green, and yellow for mixing, retouched with grass-green No. 5, and brown No. 108.

PLATE LXVI. is intended for fret-sawyers. The Japanese cabinet shown (for the display of small specimens of china or bric-à-brac) consists of eight plain and eight ornamentally sawn-out pieces, of which working designs are given, with a miniature drawing of the whole cabinet, to show how the different parts are to be fitted together. The panels ought to be three eighths of an inch thick, and the wood either oak left unpolished, or close-grained walnut, or mahogany stained black or dark slate color and polished. If a dark color is selected, the doors may be lined with a thin panel of gilt wood or card-board, and the salient parts of the design—such as the bird, some of the leaves, and crossings of the bars—touched up with gold. The backs of the open compartments can be either left uncovered, if the wall-paper against which the cabinet is to stand is of a suitable color for showing up the articles displayed on the shelves, or they can be fitted in with dark velvet or looking-glasses.

PLATE LXVII., a design for fan-decoration, is admirably adapted for pen-and-ink work. Prout's brown ink (which may be bought at almost any artist's material store for forty cents a bottle) and an ordinary steel pen should be used. The lining with the pen should always be done downward; otherwise the ink will spatter. Comparatively fine gros-grain silk should be used. Before being used it should be dipped into a pan of Cox's solution of gelatine thinned with water, or into a bath of strong alum-water, and it should then be stretched to dry. The number of sticks for such a fan varies from thirteen to sixteen. Twenty-two inches is about the standard width.

The portrait plaque—"Sara Bernhardt"—on the first page can only be attempted successfully by a professional artist or a very skilful amateur. For the ground use yellow ochre, brown bitume and black and blue. When dry, with an eraser clean the straight lines, and the fleur-de-lis in order to put raised gold in these places (see August Number). When the ground has been baked with the enamelled lines and flowers, put a blue outline around the fleur-de-lis, and a blue line on the left of the straight lines as a shadow. The painting of the head is supposed to be understood. For the necktie of black silk, use a coat of raven black and blue all over, with shading in black. The dress is yellow-brown; when dry put in the pattern with brown bitume, taking out the extreme lights with a piece of wood or a knife. The lizard is silver or gold. The collar is light-blue in the half-tints, mixed with gray No. 2 in the shadows.

New Publications.

MODELLING IN CLAY. (Robert Clarke & Co., Cincinnati,) is the title of a little hand-book for beginners, by A. L. Vago, with an appendix containing useful suggestions on modelling foliage and similar objects for pottery and architectural decorations, by Benn Pitman, of the Cincinnati School of Design. Modelling cannot be learned by book-instruction, but such information as can be acquired without a master—for instance, regarding the tools and materials to be used and the mechanical part of the work—is given fully and lucidly in these pages. We do not see the value of Mr. Vago's suggestion that the novice should begin with an old shoe for a model, when there are many objects of interest upon which it would be just as easy for him to try his hand. There is no objection, indeed, to the pupil beginning by copying the cast of a head or torso. Some knowledge of drawing is necessary, of course; but it were folly to attempt to model in clay or any other material without understanding thoroughly at least the rudiments of that art.

CHARCOAL-DRAWING WITHOUT A MASTER, published by Robert Clarke & Co., of Cincinnati, is a translation of a volume by Karl Robert, which in France has gone through many editions, and has received the stamp of approval of some of the best artists. To one who knows how to draw, the value of this treatise cannot be doubted; but serviceable as are the charcoal and stump to artist and amateur—and assuredly there is no other such convenient and rapid medium for noting impressions—in the hand of one who has yet to learn how to draw they have little advantage over the lead-pencil, except in that

wrong lines in charcoal are more easily obliterated than those of black lead. The original portion of Mr. Robert's book is supplemented by lessons on some interesting studies after Allongé, who is a veritable "master" of charcoal-drawing.

EHRICHS' FASHION QUARTERLY for the fall, just out, is full of information of interest to the ladies. Miss Juliet Corson, Superintendent of the New York Cooking School, continues her practical lessons for housekeepers. Among the illustrated articles, is one, on "Lace-Making in America," and there is another entitled "Lessons in Dress-Making." Scores of cuts illustrate the fashions of the day in every department of dress, and many pages are devoted to a profusely illustrated catalogue of novel fancy articles, with price lists.

Among the Dealers.

THE choicest new draperies for interior decoration are mostly in oriental designs or modifications of the best tapestries and brocades of about the Louis XIV. period. A visit to the upholstery department of Messrs. Arnold, Constable & Co. will give one an insight into the richness of the costly fabrics at present used for hangings in the houses of wealthy persons of taste. Among the materials employed are silk velours, broché silk velours, broché lampasades, and broché "tinsel" damask—the "tinsel" consisting of pure gold and silver threads worked into the goods. Some of the designs of the latter are really superb, one, especially beautiful, being of the period of Louis XIII. Another sumptuous fabric is of woven silk and gold lampasse, the design being antique Moorish—a literal copy from the walls of the Alhambra. In more moderate priced goods for curtains and portières there are silk tapestries and Florentine goods in admirable Indian, Persian, and Japanese designs, with unexceptionable colorings. For light draperies, nothing can exceed in beauty of texture and delicacy of tone the simple Madras and Crete goods which are now deservedly popular.

WHEN we consider that we have American merchants with the high degree of taste and special knowledge necessary for the furnishing of foreign workmen with the ideas for the production of such artistic work in embroidered dress goods as have lately been made in Paris, from home designs, for Messrs. James McCreery & Co., of New York, it must be regretted that we have to send abroad to have these ideas carried into effect. It will be long, however, before we shall be able to produce in this country such wondrous fabrics as those to which we refer. We shall attempt to describe some of them, although to do them justice were impossible. A marvel of delicacy in fabric, tint and embroidery are some flounces in pale lemon mousseline de soie, with finely-worked flowers produced by hand-loom. A cashmere robe, with stamped velvet inset, is richly embroidered by hand. A silk-embroidered black cashmere offers a delightful harmony of color, with lilac, green and old-gold prevailing. There are damassé velvets—some white, with their satin grounds and velvet flowers "coupés et frizes;" others with prune-colored flowers on silver ground; others, again, in prune color and gold, and some of rare delicacy of tone in dark-gray on a ground of pearl-gray. Some beaded velvets are wonderfully rich. There is one in black, almost covered with a diaper design of black beads, with here and there effective markings of gold beads. Another of purple has flowers worked in beads of various colors, with the outlines designed by golden bands of narrow braid; and for trimming a vest, cuffs, and pockets there is, on a foundation of light-blue satin, a combination of flowers and figures worked in colored beads in a way that by night must produce a remarkable effect; and a costume that by gas-light must be more sparkling yet, is a white brocaded silk, figured all over with bead tassels of prismatic hues. There are superb woven silks with dead-gold or silver grounds, with a horse-chestnut design in delicate lilac, figurings in silver thread on white silk or satin, and many beautiful patterns of more serviceable character from quaint devices of long ago, to secure which many an old European palace and château must have been ransacked and put under contribution.

MESSRS. DE GRAAF & TAYLOR—who seem to have a peculiar talent for inventing new articles of furniture—have produced a chair to go into the recess of a window which, while, fully answering its legitimate purpose, looks like a lounge when seen from the street. They are also making a variety of pieces of odd shapes, to break up the monotonous formality of the regulation parlor furniture.

IT is gratifying to learn of the increasing demand for carpets of the more artistic designs, and that they are steadily, if slowly, supplanting the old style patterns of bright-hued cabbage-like roses and other shaded flower monstrosities. Many, of course, still cling to the latter, failing to see the vulgarity of them, or the superiority, from an artistic standpoint, of the quiet-toned carpets of unobtrusive designs which most of the best manufacturers have given us of late. To those persons who are willing to have their tastes in such matters improved, we recommend a visit to the upholstery department of Arnold, Constable & Co., and the study of some carpets there made after designs by Southwell or Templeton, who evidently have perfect appreciation of the correct principles of color and design in flat decoration, and understand their application to carpet manufacture.